applied to this event in *1 Maccabees* 1:54. Now a further fulfillment is prophesied: the destruction of City and Temple in A.D. 70. But Jesus is also predicting the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the world in the traditional language of prophecy (*Isaiah* 13:10; 34:4). Jerusalem - with the Temple - was the centre of the Jewish faith, and it was believed that God had a special presence there. When the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and flattened the Temple to the ground, for the Jews and the earliest Christians this was an absolutely catastrophic event, and must have signaled for them the beginning of the end.

A closer look reveals three different kinds of material: (a) some probably generated by the Church in response to the current persecutions; (b) some in the style of apocalyptic literature; and (c) two authentic parables (the fig-tree and the steward) and a saying which has been placed here by association ("Heaven and earth will pass away . . . . "). The destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world, the hard time that Christians were having - all three are connected in the mind of Mark and therefore in the Jesus represented by Mark; and it is a suitable introduction to that part of the Gospel which deals with the disaster which is about to strike Jesus and his disciples. It is from this point on that the net starts to close on Jesus and his fate becomes sealed.

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